



**Stephen J. Hoenig, M.D., R.V.T., F.A.C.S.**  
Vascular & Endovascular Surgeon



Emerson Hospital JCB Suite 770 • 131 ORNAC Concord MA 01742-2514 • Tel: 978.369.4468 • Fax: 978.369.4213

Health Alliance • Leominster Hospital Medical Office Bldg. • 50 Memorial Dr., Suite 112 • Leominster, MA 01453-2205 • Tel: 978.534.3399 • Fax: 978.537.4929

Instructions for discharge:  
**Percutaneous Saphenous Vein Ablation**

**Indications:** People with painful prominent varicose veins that have developed secondary to incompetence of the greater saphenous vein. Incompetence means that the valves in the vein which ordinarily direct blood from toes to heart have become dysfunctional and allow blood to flow in the reverse direction. Pressure develops in the saphenous vein and the varicose branches leading to swelling and discomfort within the vein wall and surrounding tissue.

**Procedure:** Two different forms of heat are used to burn and obliterate the saphenous vein. This prevents blood from flowing in the reverse direction, decompresses the branch, varicose veins and alleviates discomfort. Presently I use radiofrequency heat (VNUS) in both offices. ***You should avoid any aspirin containing products for two weeks before and two after the procedure.*** You will be given a prescription for valium to be taken prior to the intervention to help with anxiety. Because of this, you should arrange for a ride home following the procedure. It is necessary to hydrate yourself 2-3 days prior to procedure.

**Expectations:** The procedure takes approximately thirty minutes to one hour and involves placing a needle into the saphenous vein at the knee level. Once this is done, the leg is anesthetized along the entire inner part of the thigh. This involves a number of needle punctures. The burning process itself should not create any discomfort. Post procedure discomfort should be managed with Tylenol or, if necessary, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agents (Advil, Motrin, Ibuprofen, etc.). If this does not adequately control the discomfort, please call the office.

**Risks:** Potential risks involve a reaction to the anesthetic solution used (lidocaine with epinephrine and bicarbonate). Access into the vein can be difficult requiring open cut-down and even termination of the procedure. Finally, while the procedure can initially appear successful, the saphenous vein can reopen possibly requiring re-intervention with repeat thermoablation or vein stripping.

**Dressing:** A firm compression stocking will be placed over your leg at the completion of the procedure which you should have obtained beforehand. This keeps the veins compressed and flat allowing the burned vein to fully collapse. It is important to make every effort to leave this in place. After forty-eight hours, the stocking can be removed and you may shower. You may experience a small amount of bleeding through the dressing. A small amount is acceptable and can be reinforced with gauze. Large amounts of bleeding should lead to a phone call to my office.

**Activity:** You are encouraged to remain active but would discourage heavy activity for one week: i.e. running, lifting weights over 20 lbs., aerobic classes, etc. Once the stocking is removed, you may experience some swelling in the leg with increased activity. You may also feel a chord along your inner thigh which may or may not become tender. Some people experience mild to moderate discomfort lasting up to two weeks. This is normal and not uncommon. If you have concern about the amount of discomfort, call the office.

**Ultrasound Evaluation:** A follow-up ultrasound will be scheduled for you within a week after the procedure and again in 3 months time. The purpose of this is both to assure complete obliteration of the saphenous vein as well as to rule out a deep vein blood clot. The literature suggests that this can happen 1% of the time, easily treated with anticoagulation if necessary.